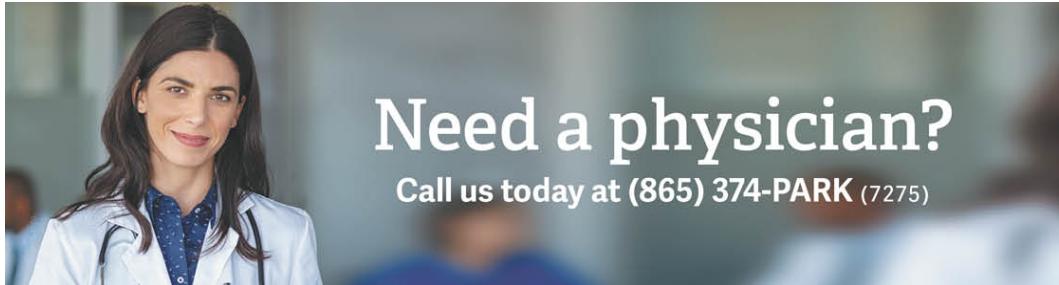


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Murphy responds; Davis sticks with 1 ‘no malice’ mayor camp violation (/articles/2022/08/12057)

August 3, 2022 by Alan Sloan

Responding to allegations made by Farragut Mayor Ron Williams in a July 27 farragutpress story — saying political blogger Sean Murphy confronted him on Town Hall grounds Saturday, July 23 — Murphy has responded with a statement.

It includes pointing to accusations of polling site violations, the publicity from which would be intended to benefit Williams’ campaign for re-election, and refutes charges that Murphy disrupts Town meetings.

To clarify polling location law and any possible violations, Chris Davis, Knox County Election Commission administrator, has been quoted again this week.

Murphy’s opening response to July 27 story

“I am writing this in response to the article published on July 27.

“I have not been contacted by any member of law enforcement.

“I was at Farragut Town Hall on Saturday, July 23, to confirm that the vehicle with Ron Williams’s signs on them was no longer inside the 100-foot zone. The signs were gone.

“I drove out (to) the back of the building where I saw Mr. Williams leaving Town Hall. I pulled into the closest parking spot to document this. At no point did I ever drive at Mr. or Mrs. Williams.”

Davis confirmed the legitimacy of the complaint Murphy made concerning signage mentioned above, “which regarded an election worker’s car having magnetic ‘Ron Williams’ stickers on it,” which the KCEC administrator noted was parked too close to the polling location.

“I talked to the election worker, and it was unintentional on her part,” Davis further stated. “... there was no malice involved”

The July 27 story’s headline included the phrase ‘No polling violations cited,’ which was inaccurate,” Murphy stated.

That, of course, is correct (We regret the error).

Accusations, responses

Murphy also stated “two residents ... witnessed a polling site violation inside Farragut Town Hall on Friday (July) 15 and Tuesday (July) 19.”

Murphy said he then called Davis “to report this on Thursday (July) 21. He left me a voicemail after 5 p.m. stating he spoke to Mr. Williams regarding things he cannot do inside Town Hall while voting is going on.”

Murphy released an audio recording of the conversation he had with Davis:

“Mayor Williams was in the building Tuesday afternoon (July 19) to vote, and he did go in the room, obviously, to vote,” Davis said in the recording.

While pointing out Williams has an office in Town Hall, the KCEC administrator added, “But I did advise him that, ‘you probably want to come in the back door; you don’t want to get anywhere near the line where people vote; and you don’t want to be caught on camera shaking hands or glad-handing or anything like that – politicking.’

“... He has to stay away from the voters. He has been informed of that. I had a conversation with him about 15 minutes (before Murphy called).”

However, when presented Murphy’s statement and asked if Williams violated any election laws inside Town Hall, Davis responded via e-mail, “No. As I have stated previously, I will stick with my answer to the farragutpress in a previous edition (July 27).

“... Another example of this is (Williams’) campaign sign in a booth paid for by Farragut at the April WOW event, which was covered in a July 27 ad,” Murphy further stated.

“I reviewed the Town calendar after my encounter and there is no reference to any museum event on the day in question, which Mr. Williams stated he was attending. Mr. Williams was leaving the building around 1 p.m. Voting ended at 3 p.m.” he added.

Asked to evaluate any possible violations by Williams concerning the April event, Davis simply replied, “No idea.”

Moreover, Town Historic Resources director Julia Barham confirmed Farragut Museum was open from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., July 23, when the museum’s new 1982 World’s Fair Exhibit was unveiled.

Williams said he and his wife, T.C. Williams, “visited the Farragut Museum — located in Town Hall — earlier in the day ...,” adding he’s also “a member of the Museum Committee.”

Report differences?

‘Disrupting’ answer

“I am a bit confused as to why the information in the (Knox County Sheriff’s Office) report is very different than what Mr. Williams’ account in the article,” Murphy stated.

Additional comments pertaining to the report were sought by farragutpress after the alleged incident, which Williams answered for our July 27 story.

Murphy, however, could not be reached for comment on the July 27 story despite repeated attempts by farragutpress.

“I have to believe if Mr. Williams (spoke) to the police that it would be in the report and the police would have contacted me,” Murphy also stated.

Answering Williams’ charge “that the suspect has a history of disrupting Open Forum Town meetings,” Murphy stated, “I have only attended two Town meetings in person: March 10 and March 24.

“Mr. Williams’ assertion that I have a history of disrupting Town meetings is false. I encourage all readers to go and watch the unedited videos of those meetings on Farragut’s website or at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cmJfy58_thM&t=1668s (or) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gUOW84B8z2U&t=2704s>



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